

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting

11 October 2006, 6 PM – 8 PM

City Hall L280

1. Call to order and Introductions 6:10 PM

SPAB members in attendance: Jodie Vice (Chair), Celeste Gilman, Jean Healy, Ben Smith, Peg Staeheli, Sarah Ross-Viles, Howard Wu (acting Board Secretary), Fiona McCargo (Get Engaged)

SDOT staff: Megan Hoyt

Absent: Rob Fellows, T Frick, Chris Tachibana

Presenters: Lise Northery (SDOT), Andrew Barash (CH2M Hill)

Public: Susan Pikeman, Chicago DOT pedestrian program

2. Approval of September minutes 6:11 PM

3. Presentation and Briefing on SR 519 Project 6:12 PM – Lise Northery (SDOT), Andrew Barash (CH2M Hill)

Lise Northery began by giving a background to the project. SR 519 is routed along Royal Brougham Way which goes in between Qwest and Safeco Field. Tonight's discussion is on phase 2 of the SR 519 project. This phase was subject to the discussions of many interests; stadium owners is concerned with wider streets; the Port of Seattle is concerned with accessibility between I-90 and the waterfront (competition with other ports, trying to attract business); railroads are concerned with better speed, reliability and safety in the area; the Washington legislature is concerned with movement of freight; City of Seattle interested in keeping it more pedestrian friendly street between the stadiums.

The planning process started with 30-day process and later to 45-day process. The 30-day process was intended to get executives of the City, the Port and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to come to some consensus. The original design for SR 519 had 9 to 11 stakeholders including WSDOT, the Port of Seattle and the City of Seattle. They decided what needed to be done. WSDOT and the City had a preliminary proposal in the spring but the Port had reservations. The 30-day process resulted with 3 options. Since there was no consensus yet between the 3 options, it was extended to 45-days.

Lise explained that the purpose of this presentation is to seek the board's input for pedestrian concerns with this project, especially for smaller events in the area. There is not much as concerned with game events because of the police

presence. This is not the last opportunity for our comments. Once the options narrow down to one, we can have further comments.

The original project purpose was to address multimodal needs: improve access for freight, ferry users, and pedestrian between I-90 to the waterfront. Lise and Andrew then proceeded to explain the three options.

Option A: A variation of the original project, which would have direct access from I-90 down Royal Brougham Way down to 2nd Avenue. A signal would be added before connection to Royal Brougham Way. Three lanes would be narrowed down to two lanes. Assumption for all options is that the rail road crossing would be closed to all traffic. This area is a high accident location. A pedestrian ramp would allow pedestrians to cross over the railroad. The reason for the ramp design is to reduce the footprint on Royal Brougham. The pedestrian ramp would loop on the east side and connects over to the west.

Option B: It would route traffic to Edgar Martinez Way (Atlantic St). The freeway traffic would be aligned to Atlantic St. Local access is allowed from 3rd Ave and connects to Royal Brougham Way. It would become a two-way, local access, circulation. On the west side of the tracks, Royal Brougham Way would be a cul-de-sac to from the west accessing the Qwest parking structure. The pedestrian bridge is still over railroad, “loopidy-loop” design.

Peg asked if this is a high pedestrian connection from the crossover to the parking structure. Andrew replied that it is at-grade connection.

Lise explained that the Port needs to transport freight from their intermodal center from the south and is concerned with the connection to the new viaduct realignment. A new improved connection would be along Colorado to Massachusetts, which would be only freight traffic. Thus, a direct access along Royal Brougham had become less of a concern, since both options are significantly more expensive than the original design.

Option C: Given limited dedicated funds, it would only build local access over the railroad including the pedestrian crossing. This option does not do anything more to the existing road network. There would be no improvement in traffic.

Lise acknowledged that there are pedestrian issues at the following: 4th Avenue S and S Atlantic Street intersection, 1st Avenue S and S Atlantic Street intersection, and at waterfront.

Andrew then presented the a xonometric of the pedestrian crossing proposal. The big concern by Union Pacific is for train movement in that area. The proposal is still very conceptual.

Ben asked if this proposal applied to only Option A. Andrew confirmed that the proposal applied to all options; all options have the same pedestrian bridge. However, only Option B and C have the road next to it.

Megan then asked how long would it take to ramp down to grade. Andrew responded by talking about the use of an elevator or escalator. Peg followed by asking if there was a ramp to go down on the other side. Andrew explained that it would be 20' wide due to the need for reducing the footprint. This is why the connection to the ground would be an escalator and elevator. Ben approved of the elevator or escalator, but also suggested the need of stairs. He explained that elevators could break down and pedestrians need reliable access between Royal Brougham and the structure.

Jodie inquired if pedestrians can use the parking garage, and if they need to cross the ramp. Andrew confirmed and added that during large events, they would close it off to traffic with police. The trigger question is what to do with small to medium sized events. A pedestrian signal could address this. The original desire was to have people to park their car in the structure and then walk across. Ben then followed up asking if pedestrians need to access the structure at the same level as the cars and whether they could enter at a lower level than the car access. Andrew explained that they need to keep both at the same level because of the existing access. Peg added that currently the access to the garage is vehicle only and is not really a pedestrian environment. The access needs to be readjusted. Andrew responded that there needs to be a new vehicle entrance. Currently, there is not one existing. To put a new entrance would require moving spaces around in the structure. It was still under discussions. At this point, the Stadium owners just want vehicle access into the garage at this point and a convenient walk between Safeco and the garage.

Peg raised the question if the issue here is between accessing the parking and the stadiums or the port access. Andrew responded that it is all of the above. There are a lot of competing interests between the Port, transit, railroads, and stadiums owners. Lise noted that the City is interested in Option B. Andrew added that the Ports point of view is the heavy mixing at Royal Brougham and 4th Avenue intersection, thus a new loop over around the intersection.

Fiona then asked how long it would take to cross on the ramp versus crossing the tracks. Andrew replied that no times were calculated. He added that prohibiting walking across the tracks is a big driver for the project. Sound Transit Sounder plans to expand service as well as the Union Pacific. Lise acknowledged that it would take longer, since the tracks would be closed off to all crossings. Fiona followed up with a question about a pedestrian access from the north. Her concern is not to have pedestrians to cross Royal Brougham Way. Lise informed us that there has been some talk about that option to add another pedestrian bridge on the north. Andrew added that because of the road closure,

crossing over Royal Brougham would not be as bad. The pedestrian ramp is aligned w/the Link light rail station.

Peg then asked what can be done for pedestrian environment. Her concerns relate to the width of the intersections and poor delineation of pedestrian space especially for non-events. The crossings are so long. Peg suggested a change in pavement as a way to bring some delineation. As a pedestrian, Peg does not feel like she belongs since there is no pedestrian presence. Lise commented that there would be a big crosswalk with overhead lighting and large pedestrian gathering space at the corners. Andrew added that Options A and B would take out the truck traffic so that the Royal Brougham and 4th Ave intersection would not experience as much trucks traffic, but it would be shifted to the intersection at S Atlantic Street and 1st Avenue S. Peg then followed up that the removal of the trucks would allow cars to go faster. She emphasized to make sure the pedestrian crossing times need to be longer. Andrew responded that the pedestrian time would dictate the operations. It was hard to find that balance between the truck traffic serving the Port and redevelopment for residences to the east.

Ben reminded us that the result of the reconfiguration was not intended for a pedestrian environment like Pike Place Market, but it needs to be a safe environment.

Andrew then reemphasized that the concern at the railroad crossing was the major driver from the beginning. The railroad crossing was such a hazard. The project is intended to accommodate many modes.

Celeste wanted to support any option that allows for pedestrian connections between the stadiums and reduces unnecessary walking. The design needed to pay attention to lighting. Andrew pointed out many of the architectural elements are to match the stadium architecture. People were happy with the results along Atlantic Street. Lise mentioned that the Mariners were concerns with the underground space beneath the overpass, and they wanted control of the space.

Lise then explained that the original agreement between the stakeholders was very detailed, everything was spelled out. Now, she wanted the board's pedestrian concerns spelled out. Sarah added that she was concerned with the elevator and escalators on the west side, and it needed accessibility. Andrew clarified that the escalators should be stairs. Access to the elevators in the structure would be accessible.

Ben commented that the board would love to have them back. He then wanted to know if there was a pedestrian plan for connecting the stadiums to the transit access from the light rail and the busway. Ben then suggested looking at another route paralleled to S Occidental Street, maybe along 4th Avenue S or through the exhibition center or along the railroad. Andrew pointed out that everything Ben

talked about was feasible, and there was some talk about a pedestrian corridor to the station. Lise added that Seattle retained the firm ZGF to look at pedestrian interests and that there was talk about connection along the railroad.

Peg then asked if the presenters wanted the board give them their preference between the options. Lise responded that the board should wait until an option is selected, and then later to talk about. Ben highlighted that the pedestrian design was the same in all options.

Lise then listed the next steps: report to executives and get consensus; go to the legislature to see what funds are available; complete this project before the Viaduct would be closed.

Ben asked if the Royal Brougham crossing would be closed during construction. He is especially concerned when the light rail opens. Lise was not sure and would get back to him.

4. Round Robin 7:00 PM

Howard talked about his experience with researching safe pedestrian crossings near his street along 35th Avenue NE near NE 130th Street. He explained that when the Fred Meyer need by was expanded, there was an “agreement” with the neighbors to provide a signal at the new realigned 35th Avenue NE and NE 130th Street intersection. From NE 130th Street, one would have to go five block north or south to cross legally across 35th Avenue NE. The current crossing at NE 130th Street is unsafe due to misalignment and Metro bus layover zone.

Fiona shared her experience at the skate board meeting and how the hosts were looking at their funding. She also saw on the news about Feet First. She has been working with Google on pedestrian search tool.

Jean talked about the safety board meeting that she held with Sarah, Nicole and Peg over the summertime. They discussed about the safety routes to school. Since Nicole is not on the board, Jean felt they needed to set up a second meeting, maybe October 25th. She wanted to see if anyone else might be interested in joining the safety committee. They meet at a coffee shop, and Peg knew the details of that place.

Celeste shared that the Waterfront committee met up last week. T, Fiona, Rob and Howard met up and agreed to write up an advisory letter to give to the governor. Rob would write a recommendation for not supporting an aerial structure. She also offered extra passes to go up the Smith Tower.

Sarah commented on how she heard people talking about the painting of the lady bug along the street. She felt that it was interesting how people are excited about it in Wallingford. She then asked Jodie how she got involved. Jodie

explained that *City Repair Project's* mission is to create public gathering spaces, one of which is called intersection repair. In Portland, they found that their intersection treatment sometimes performed as a traffic calming device. They came up to Seattle and worked in Wallingford. Megan hasn't heard anything on SDOT's reaction. Jodie understood that the cost is \$1,500. *City Repair Project* hoped that this demonstration project would inspire other groups to try this. Jodie has worked at Squire Park. It would be even more beneficial if it can be proven that it slows down traffic. Susan then inquired the size of the lady bug. Jodie thought it took up the entire width of a typical neighborhood, local intersection. Megan thought it would be around 25' x 25'. Susan then wanted to know how did this project get funded. Jodie explained that they had to apply for a street use permit to close the street and to put up barricades. The design was completed in-house. They worked with SDOT with the design. Sarah thanked Jodie for the information and wanted to talk to the Eastlake council about it. Sarah then added that last month, she has also been looking for pedestrian tools, street assessments and pedestrian assessment for school walk routes.

Megan talked about how the national center of pedestrian and bicycling has developed a tool to assess paths, and looking for pilot programs. The whole thing was designed for people to be involved to gather the data, using PDAs as tools. She also worked on the Stone Way Avenue N open house meeting. Megan mentioned that she needed inputs in the Ballard open house. Also, because of the City's paper quota, Megan checked with the board if they need to have the meeting notes printed out. Everyone agreed that there was no need to print out the meeting notes but continue printing the agenda.

Ben talked about the many meetings he participated this past month. He felt that the Viaduct meeting was interesting. The meeting has the alternatives station in the back room. He noted that there were interesting proposals that were out of the box. One included a design looking at offsetting aerials and looking at different heights. At the Stone Way road diet meeting, he noticed that there were many supporters and objectors. Most were concerned with traffic congestion and safety problems associated with two lanes of traffic. People who were against the road diet were very vocal. Megan estimated that around 150 people turned out. Jodie wanted to know if more people were for favor or against the road diet. Ben thought that it seemed equal for support and against. Ben noted that when a bicyclist started to speak, the crowd was not receptive. On a separate issue, Ben thought there was an opportunity for painting graffiti on Pine Street between Boren Avenue and Bellevue Avenue.

Megan mentioned that at the intersection of Leary Way and 8th Avenue NW, there is a new push button installed. Megan encouraged everyone to go see it and to comment. New feature of the push button is that it has an indicator light on it. Celeste noticed that along NE 65th Street, the new pedestrian buttons seems to have indicators and APS device. Megan wanted more comments about the buttons, seeking input from the board now. Jean wanted to know what

neighborhood is it in. Megan responded that it is near the Fred Meyer in “Frelard” or Balmont”.

Peg brought up the issue of mid-block closures and construction closures and what the board can do to address these issues. Megan followed with an account of an incident when she got off the bus and walked up Boren Street, she noticed that sidewalks on both sides of the street were closed. When she investigated who closed the sidewalks, it was City crews who closed it. This incident shows how difficult it is to get everyone to make sure adequate walking paths are available during construction. It has been suggested that contractors need to submit a construction permit to catch pedestrian sidewalk closure.

Peg suggested that if this situation does occur, we need to call 684- ROAD to bring the sidewalk closure attention. Peg then talked about going to a West Seattle meeting with the National Park Service (NPS). At the meeting, the NPS discussed their study of the West Seattle/Duwamish area and are working with University of Washington. The NPS was looking at urban connectivity with trails and parks. There is a website and mapping information. The NPS is trying to map pedestrian trails from the Duwamish over the ridges to West Seattle and then north. They are looking at what streets to cross. The program is funded through the NPS. Peg noted how interesting that these projects happen but they are happening out of context. Megan commented that usually SDOT get involved after decisions are made. Peg promised to forward the information to Megan. Peg then recounted a hazard location for impaired people. In downtown, near the bus barn at 8th Avenue and Pine Street, the intersection was partially blocked, including the crosswalk, which is a hazard for the visually impaired. Peg noted that when she was walking with Jean back from the Pedestrian Board meeting, the Spanish Table space intruded into the sidewalk space. Peg suggested that it needs to be painted. Jean recounted that two years ago, after the retreat, she had noticed the same thing and had contacted SDOT about it. At that time, there was a cement protrusion, and it seemed like there was nothing done.

Jodie talked about the “No on 933” campaign that she was working on. She also went to a council meeting on the Viaduct. Jodie met with some folks in the Georgetown neighborhood about a visioning process, and they want to look at pedestrian improvements along Airport Way. Recently the brewery in that area was recently bought for redevelopment. The developer and neighborhood are interested in pedestrian improvements along Airport Way. Jodie mentioned that she would be working as a consultant in finding someone to help out. Jodie is also looking into the budget and wanted to find out if the pedestrian plan was included in the “Bridging the Gap” measure. Megan was not sure what would happen if the levy fails. Currently, it is on the levy. Jodie felt that the board should get the pedestrian plan in the budget now, since the bike plan is underway, it should go into the general budget. Peg concurred with Jodie. There’s a lot of money wasted now for putting out pedestrian issues like fires.

Peg argued that there are no guidelines for these issues and a disconnect with what the goals and design to help with future projects. New projects would use the plan to save money for extra support for thinking about pedestrian issues. Jodie then talked about if there is any interest in the budget, then board members should meet soon, and tell the council and mayor about our thoughts on pedestrian issues. She mentioned that she would send out an e-mail to see if anyone was interested. Jodie was at the budget comment meeting this evening, and it appeared that over 200 people there.

Megan then provided opportunities for Susan to ask questions. Susan wanted to find out what a pedestrian plan would include. Peg responded by stating that it would be what the board envisioned as a broad policy. The plan would connect with other policies and tie it back to the right-of-way manual. It would revisit details in the manual and provide the “big-picture” issues and key connections.

Susan added that Chicago has a lot of student and interns. They would do all the picture taking and measurements. The bike interns got paid based upon the level of college undergrad experienced, starting from \$8/hr and goes up to \$12/hr. The intern experience is more like training. Peg commented that Seattle pay rate for interns is higher, but it then scrimps the budget.

Susan expressed her excitement and interest in the Seattle Pedestrian Board and was curious about how to get one started in Chicago. Megan suggested that it would be helpful to have an envision process and identify the top priorities. Susan felt that the big focus would be on safety and then asked if the board has a retreat. Jodie chimed in that the board has one once a year for half a day. Megan then added that one of the monthly meetings in the year is a field trip.

Susan then asked if *Feet First* been a participant on the board. Peg responded that they have participated in the past. The strongest boards are the planning and design commissions. Peg then noted that the pedestrian board should think about how the other boards interact. She felt that it was interesting to hear the contrast in the design and pedestrian board interests. Megan felt that the fact people know the board exist is a huge part of legitimizing its role.

Susan wondered if projects commonly presented to the board. Peg answered that in the past, the board has requested projects to be presented to the board. Now they think about the pedestrian board presentation as part of the process.

5. Pedestrian Board Recruitment 7:50 PM

Megan asked board members to suggest names via e-mail for potential pedestrian board candidates for the board. She explained that every year, the mayor's office sends out a press release about the pedestrian board recruitment.

The most success has come through targeted e-mails and letters to people or groups.

She talked to Rebecca about setting a date and timeline. Applications are due November 30, the last Thursday in the month. Celeste noted that it is after the holiday weekend. Megan felt that the applications should be post marked by the Monday, November 27. The interviews would be held in the beginning of January.

Megan wanted to know from the board if she should send an e-mail or letter to previous applicants asking them for any updated information. She then wanted to see if she should send a draft to the board for comments. Everyone agreed to both questions. Megan said she would work on the announcement. There will be four positions open. Next year will have an opening, and then there would be another two years before another opening. The draft letters would be sent out, and hopefully it would be formally sent out by November 1.

Peg felt that the board needed age and geographic location diversity. Jean added that they need to look at a variety of disabilities. Megan needed the board's help with input due to her involvement with the crosswalk projects.

6. Upcoming Agenda Items 7:58 PM

Jodie brought to the board's attention that nominations and elections will be held next meeting. Positions include: chair, vice-chair, and secretary. SDOT sidewalk criteria and Rainier Safety Project would also be on the agenda. Jodie wondered if there would be enough time.

Megan felt that there needed a balance of chatting with topical issues. She was not sure about the bicycle master plan presentation. Megan would need to follow up on it. She then asked if there is anything we should consider for January, February, or March agenda. Jodie suggested potentially looking at the South East Seattle Transportation Study.

Jean asked if it was ok for potential candidates to come to our meetings. Megan thought that it was a good point and suggested that if any of the board members know any good candidates, to let them come to the meeting.

7. Adjourn 8:05 PM